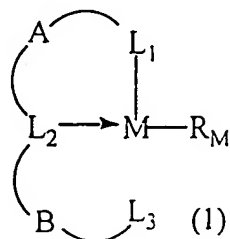


IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1 to 8 and 12 to 14 are amended.

--1. (Amended) A compound of the formula



wherein

M is an element of group 12 of the Periodic Table;

R_M is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, halogen, alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, alkoxy, cycloalkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, cycloalkylthio, arylthio, amino, alkylamino, dialkylamino, cycloalkylamino, di(cycloalkyl)amino, alkyl(cycloalkyl)amino, arylamino, diarylamino, alkylarylamino and (cycloalkyl)arylamino;

A₂
cont.

A and B are independently selected from the group consisting of carbon chain of 2 to 4 carbon atoms, optionally substituted by at least one member of the group consisting of substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, and aryl, the substituent is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano;

L₁ and L₂ are independently -E₁₅(R₁₅)- in which E₁₅ is an element of group 15 of the Periodic Table and R₁₅ is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl and aryl, in which said substituent is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano or -E₁₄RR'R" in which E₁₄ is an element of group 14 of the Periodic Table and R, R' and R" are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, alkoxy, cycloalkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, cycloalkylthio and arylthio, in which the substituents are at least one member of the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano; or -SO₂Q in which Q is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, haloalkyl and aryl optionally substituted by at least one

substituent selected from the group consisting of alkyl, haloalkyl and halogen;

*As
cont.*
L₃

is $-E'_{15}(R'_{15})(R''_{15})$ or $-E_{16}(R_{16})$ in which

E'_{15} is an element of group 15 of the Periodic Table and

E_{16} is an element of group 16 of the Periodic Table and

R'_{15} , and R''_{15} and R_{16} are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl and aryl, in which the substituents are at least one member of the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano or $-E'_{14}TT'T''$ in which E'_{14} is an element of group 14 of the Periodic Table and T, T' and T'' are independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, substituted or non-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, aryl, alkoxy, cycloalkoxy, aryloxy, alkylthio, cycloalkylthio and arylthio, in which said substituents are at least one member of the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, nitro and cyano; or $-SO_2Q'$ in which Q' is selected from the group consisting of halogen, alkyl, haloalkyl and aryl optionally substituted by at least one member of the group consisting of alkyl, haloalkyl and halogen. --

A₃ --2. (Amended) A compound of claim 1, in the form of a monomer or a dimer. --

--3. (Amended) A compound of claim 1 wherein

R_M is alkyl;

A and B are, independently, a carbon chain of 2 to 4 carbon atoms;

L_1 and L_2 are, independently, $-E_{15}(R_{15})-$ in which E_{15} is nitrogen or phosphorus and R_{15} is hydrogen or $-E_{14}RR'R''$ in which E_{14} is carbon or silicon and R, R' and R'' are, independently, hydrogen or alkyl;

L_3 is $-E'_{15}(R'_{15})(R''_{15})$ in which E'_{15} is nitrogen or phosphorus, and R'_{15} and R''_{15} are, independently, hydrogen or $-E'_{14}TT'T''$ in which E'_{14} is carbon or silicon atom and T, T' and T'' are independently, hydrogen or alkyl.

--4. (Amended) A compound of claim 1 wherein M is zinc. --

--5. (Amended) A compound of claim 1 wherein

R_M is methyl;

A and B are, independently, a carbon chain of 2 carbon atoms;

L_1 and L_2 are, independently, $-E_{15}(R_{15})-$ in which E_{15} is nitrogen and R_{15} is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl and $-E_{14}RR'R''$ in which E_{14} is silicon and R , R' and R'' are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl and isopropyl;

L_3 is $-E'_{15}(R'_{15})(R''_{15})$ in which E'_{15} is nitrogen, and R'_{15} and R''_{15} are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl and $-E'_{14}TT'T''$ in which E'_{14} is silicon and T , T' and T'' are, independently, selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, methyl, ethyl, propyl, and isopropyl. --

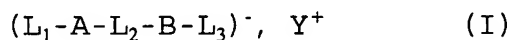
--6. (Amended) A compound of claim 1 which is

$-[Me_3SiN(H)CH_2CH_2N(Me)CH_2CH_2NSiMe_3]ZnMe$; or

$-[Me_3SiN(H)CH_2CH_2N(H)CH_2CH_2NSiMe_3]ZnMe$. --

--7. (Amended) A compound of claim 6 in dimer form. --

Ag --8. (Amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of claim 1, comprising reacting a compound of the formula



wherein L_1 , A, L_2 , B and L_3 are defined as claim 1 and Y is hydrogen or metal or a metallic with a compound of the formula



in which M and R_M are defined as in claim 1 and Z is a parting group, to obtain a compound of claim 1.

--12. (Amended) A process for the preparation of block or random copolymers, or polymers which comprises contacting at least one monomer, a chain initiator and/or a regulator, a polymerization catalyst and optionally a polymerization solvent, at a temperature between ambient temperature and 250°C, for a few minutes to 300 hours, wherein the chain initiator and/or the regulator and the polymerization catalyst are a compound of claim 1. --

A₆ --13. (Amended) The process of claim 12, wherein the monomer is selected from the group consisting of epoxides, and cyclic esters. --

--14. (Amended) A polymer or copolymer prepared by the process of claim 12. --

Cancel claims 9 to 11 and add the following claims.

A₁₁ --15. In a process for the polymerization or copolymerization of heterocycles, the improvement comprising using as the polymerization catalyst a compound of claim 1. --

--16. The process of claim 15 wherein the heterocycle is propylene oxide. --

--17. In a process for the polymerization or copolymerization of cyclic esters, the improvement comprising using as the polymerization catalyst a compound of claim 1. --

--18. The process of claim 17 wherein the cyclic ester is that of lactic acid and/or glycolic acid. --
